

How to Train Your Memory

Memory problems can sometimes come with changes in your health. There are many ways to help. Some people can learn ways to improve their memory. Others can learn tips on how to cope with the memory skills that they have. This handout describes how to train your memory so it works better.

What's the first step?

First you need to know your strengths and weaknesses. Test yourself with different memory tasks. Before each task think about:

- How hard is this task for me?
- How much will I remember? Take a guess.
- What will help me remember?

After the task, see how much you remembered. Notice what you did to help you remember. Talk to your therapist about your strengths and weaknesses.

Learning how to remember is more important than how much you remember.



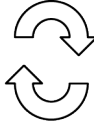

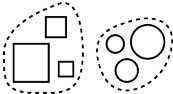
How can I improve my memory?






There are different ways to improve your memory. Below is a list of memory strategies for you to try.

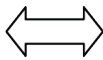


Some memory strategies work better for some tasks than others. Try to choose the strategy that will be most useful for the task.

Choose 1 to 2 strategies and try to use them in different situations. If one does not work, try another strategy.

Ways to help you remember

<p>Repeat</p> 	<p>Repeat what you want to learn over and over again. You can do this by saying it out loud, writing it down, or both. Repeat it over longer and longer periods of time.</p> <p>This method can help you remember one thing. It will not improve your memory in general.</p>
<p>Screen out</p> 	<p>Try to screen out or ignore information that you don't need.</p>
<p>Group</p> 	<p>Think about how different items connect. Then group them together. To remember what to get from the store, group items by type (for example, cheese, milk and butter could go together, and fruits and vegetables could go together.)</p>

<p>First letter</p> 	<p>Remember the first letter of the words you want to remember.</p> <p>You can also make up a new word from these letters. For example, to remember the names of 4 people at work (Lee, Ali, Maria and Paul) you can use the word LAMP.</p>
<p>Rhyme</p> 	<p>Use a rhyme or tune to remember a fact.</p>
<p>Story</p> 	<p>Make up a story using the facts you need to remember.</p>
<p>Picture it</p> 	<p>Picture the object you want to remember. If you want to remember a person's name try to connect their name to their face.</p> <p>You can also picture an object that makes you think of that person (a teapot for someone who loves tea, or a bow tie for someone who always wears them).</p>
<p>Put it in order</p> 	<p>If you need to remember a long list of words, learn them in a certain order. For the names of provinces, you can learn them from East to West or by region. Also try learning some things in alphabetical order.</p>

<p>Link it</p> 	<p>Link a fact or event to other information. For example, when you want to remember the name of a city, think of the towns and cities in the same area.</p> <p>You can also link it to something else it makes you think of. When you do this, you are making associations.</p>
<p>Think around it</p> 	<p>Think about what else was going on around you. Where were you? Who were you with? Imagine being there.</p>
<p>Retrace your steps</p> 	<p>To remember where you put something, ask yourself: what was I doing? Where did I go before that?</p>

Other strategies that may help:

Training my memory

Just like the rest of your body, your brain also needs regular exercises. When you practice using the different memory strategies in this pamphlet in your daily life, you are already exercising your brain. Other ways to exercise your brain can be through games.

Board games and card games are commonly used as brain exercises. Some examples include:

- memory board games
- matching memory games
- Scrabble
- checkers
- chess

Mobile and tablet apps usually have games that focus on thinking and memory training. Some of these apps are free.

Sources:

“Memory”, Occupational Therapy, Musculoskeletal Program, TRI

“Memory Retraining”, Occupational Therapy, TRI

“How Memory Works”, Fibromyalgia Program, TRI

Kapur, Narinder (1991). Managing Your Memory – A self-help memory manual for improving everyday memory skills. Southampton General Hospital.



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